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**AIAA APPLAUDS SWIFT ACTION OF CONGRESS IN AFFIRMING
ABILITY OF NASA TO PARTICIPATE IN TECHNICAL CONFERENCES**

March 24, 2009 – Reston, Va. – The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) applauds the swift action of Congress to affirm the ability of NASA to participate in technical conferences, by clarifying the intent of language inserted into the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008, P.L. 110-422, through the passage of the Omnibus Appropriations for FY 2009, P.L. 111-8, signed into law on March 11, 2009. The House Explanatory Statement concerning P.L. 111-8 specifically states that “in no event shall the funds appropriated by this Act be subject to the limitation of Section 1121(a) of P.L. 110-422 with respect to NASA expenditures for scientific and technical conferences or education-related conferences in which NASA science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) content is disseminated.”

AIAA President George Muellner welcomed this news, stating, “Since the intent of Congress in the NASA Reauthorization has now been clarified, NASA’s internal memorandum issued in October that restricted all travel and participation to conferences can be lifted. Now forums, such as those hosted by AIAA, that allow for the necessary exchange of ideas and concepts that stimulate and advance scientific dialogue can continue to occur with the active participation of all interested parties.”

Signed into law on October 15, 2008, Section 1121(a) of P.L. 110-422, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008, restricted funding for NASA conferences and capped all related expenses at \$5 million each fiscal year. Following the provision’s passage in both the House of Representatives and Senate, NASA announced in an internal policy on October 6, 2008 that “until further notice, no FY ’09 funds are to be committed, obligated or disbursed to sponsor, travel to, or pay admission to an international or domestic conference.” This policy left the Agency and those who rely on NASA’s participation in scientific, technical, and educational conferences in limbo pending such “further notice.” The clarification of Congress’ intent will allow this uncertainty to be resolved.

AIAA Executive Director Bob Dickman, USAF (ret.), thanked those who worked to achieve this clarification: “AIAA’s Public Policy team, in collaboration with other technical societies and congressional staff, worked successfully to include in the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill a provision that clarifies language in the 2009 NASA Reauthorization Bill that severely limited the ability of NASA personnel and their teammates to participate in technical conferences and symposia. We appreciate the efforts of all those involved in helping to eliminate what had become a significant barrier to NASA’s ability to disseminate its critical research and development accomplishments.”

AIAA advances the state of aerospace science, engineering, and technological leadership. Headquartered in suburban Washington, D.C., the Institute serves over 35,000 members in 65 regional sections and 79 countries. AIAA membership is drawn from all levels of industry, academia, private research organizations, and government. For more information, visit www.aiaa.org.

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